

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 SAB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05

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NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSO-00 EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7377

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PLO, LY, LE, XF

SUBJECT: QADHAFI AND FEDAYEEN LEADERS JOIN IN OPPOSING EGYPTIAN
POLICIES

REF: (A) TRIPOLI 662; (B) TRIPOLI 664

SUMMARY: LIBYAN EFFORTS TO COORDINATE MORE EFFECTIVE AND
BROADER-BASED FEDAYEEN OPPOSITION TO EGYPTIAN-US-ISRAELI
MOVES AIMED AT ACHIEVING FURTHER STEP-BY-STEP PROGRESS TOWARD
ME SETTLEMENT APPEAR TO BE HAVING SOME SUCCESS. PLO
LEADERSHIP AGAIN SEEMS ANXIOUS TO GALVANIZE GENERAL ARAB
OPPOSITION TO SADAT'S POLICIES IN THIS REGARD, AND WE EXPECT
THIS DEISRE WILL INCREASINGLY BE MANIFESTED IN ANOTHER MAJOR
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PLO POLITICAL/PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN AGAINST SADAT SIMILAR TO

THAT WHICH WAS MOUNTED EARLIER THIS YEAR. SHOULD SUCH CAMPAIGN APPEAR NOT TO PRODUCE DESIRED RESULTS, WE BELIEVE 'ARAFAT AND CO. ARE LIKELY TO MOVE CLOSER TO LIBYANS AND FEDAYEEN "REJECTION-ISTS AND PERHAPS JOIN THEM IN CONCERTED TERRORIST EFFORTS TO SABOTAGE SADAT'S POLICIES AND SPOIL ME SETTLEMENT EFFORT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIMARY PURPOSE OF LAST WEEKEND'S GATHERING OF UNUSUALLY LARGE ASSORTMENT OF FEDAYEEN LUMINARIES IN TRIPOLI FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH QADHAFI AND MEMBERS OF HIS REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (REFTELS) CLEARLY WAS TO COORDINATE LIBYAN-FEDAYEEN OPPOSITION TO EGYPT'S CONTINUING ADHERENCE TO STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TO NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. (WHOLE LIBYAN-INSPIRED AFFAIR HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE COVERAGE, INVARIABLY ENTHUSIASTIC, IN BEIRUT PRESS-- PARTICULARLY THOSE ORGANS OWNED BY LARGE OR SUSCEPTIBLE TO ITS INFLUENCE.) FEDAYEEN "REJECTIONISTS," OF COURSE, HAVE ALL ALONG REMAINED ACUTELY SUSPICIOUS OF AND VIOLENTLY OPPOSED TO SADAT'S POLICIES. THEIR REACTIONS TO HIS SALZBURG MEETING WITH PRES FORD, HIS EARLIER REMARKS IN KUWAIT RE EGYPT'S READINESS TO ACCEPT ISRAEL'S EXISTENCE, AND HIS DECISION TO REOPEN SUEZ CANAL HAVE BEEN PREDICTABLY NEGATIVE AND OPPROBRIOUS. WE WERE THEREFORE NOT PARTICULARLY SURPRISED TO HEAR HABASH AND BIBRI IN LIBYA DENOUNCING SADAT FOR COOPERATING WITH "AMERICAN-ZIONIST PLOT" TO UNDERMINE "STRUGGLE OF ARAB NATION," ETC., AND ANNOUNCING FORMATION OF NEW REJECTION FRONT (REFTEL B). WE WERE STRUCK, HOWEVER, BY FACT THAT PDFLP HAS LATELY JOINED SAME CHORUS, WITH HAWATMEH INVEIGHING AGAINST SADAT IN TRIPOLI (REFTEL A) AND PDFLP SPOKESMAN HERE ON JUNE 7 TAKING SIMILAR HARD LINE RE EGYPTIAN LEADER'S "PERFIDY."

2. UNTIL RECENTLY, PLO/FATAH SPOKESMEN HAVE BEEN NOTICEABLY SILENT ON SUBJECT OF EGYPTIAN POLICY (ALTHOUGH THEY WERE QUICK TO BRAND IDF THIN-OUT IN SINAI AS "TACTICAL MANEUVER" TO DIVIDE ARAB RANKS). THIS RETICENCE DOUBTLESS STEMMED FROM PLO LEADERSHIP'S PREOCCUPATION WITH RECENT EVENTS IN LEBANON, BUT IT MAY EQUALLY HAVE BEEN DUE TO INITIAL CONFUSION GENERATED AMONG 'ARAFAT AND CO. BY WHAT APPEARS TO THEM AS SADAT'S ABRUP REVERSION TO FURTHER DEALINGS WITH USG AS PART OF SUDDENLY RESUSCITATED STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS. (SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT APPARENT FAILURE OF KISSINGER MISSION LAST MARCH PRODUCED WARY RAPPROCHEMENT BETWEEN 'ARAFAT

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AND SADAT, SLACKENING IN VIRULENT ANTI-EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN THEN BEING CONDUCTED THROUGH PLO PROPAGANDA APPARATUS, AND NOTICEABLE DIMINUTION IN PLO ENTHUSIASM FOR FORMATION OF JOINT PLO-SYRIAN COMMAND.)

3. IN ANY EVENT, WE HAVE LATELY PICKED UP CLEAR SIGNALS THAT SO-CALLED FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" HAVE AGAIN BECOME ALARMED OVER SADAT'S BEHAVIOR AND MORE FEARFUL THAN EVER THAT HIS RENEWED ESPOUSAL OF

STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS WILL LEAD TO "PARTIAL SOLUTION" OF ME CONFLICT, SPELL YET ANOTHER POSTPONEMENT OF GENEVA CONFERENCE AND RESULT IN PLO'S CONTINUED EXCLUSION FROM SETTLEMENT PROCESS. OPENING OF SUEZ CANAL, IN PARTICULAR, SEEMS TO HAVE RENEWED THEIR SUSPICIONS THAT SADAT MAY HAVE MADE SECRET COMMITMENTS TO USG THAT WOULD TEND TO NEUTRALIZE SINAI FRONT AS PRELIMINARY TO FURTHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS. WOULD ALSO APPEAR PLO "MODERATES" HAVE COME TO SHARE "REJECTIONIST" BELIEF THAT SADAT IS CONDITIONING HIS SUPPORT FOR FEDAYEEN IN LEBANON ON THEIR ACQUIESCENCE IN HIS POLICIES VIS-A-VIS US AND ISRAEL, JUST AS THEY REGARD NASSER AS HAVING TRIED TO IMPOSE ACCEPTANCE OF 1970 SUEZ CEASEFIRE ON PLO IN RETURN FOR HIS SUPPORT FOR FEDAYEEN IN THEIR CONTEST WITH KING HUSSEIN FOR DOMINATION OF EAST BANK. (TO THIS DAY, MOST PALESTINIANS INSIST THAT CATASTROPHE WHICH OVERTOOK FEDAYEEN MOVEMENT IN JORDAN IN 1970 RESULTED FROM "PLOT" IN WHICH NASSER--ANGERED BY PLO OPPOSITION TO HIS ACCEPTANCE OF ROGERS PLAN--COLLABORATED WITH HASHEMITES, US AND ISRAEL SUPPRESSING FEDAYEEN PRESENCE IN JORDAN.)

4. GIVEN THESE PALESTINIAN PERCEPTIONS, QUESTION WHICH CONFRONTS PLO LEADERSHIP IS WHETHER, AND HOW EFFECTIVELY, IT CAN AGAIN OPPOSE EGYPTIAN POLICY WITHOUT INCURRING SAME PENALTIES--THIS TIME IN LEBANON-- AS FEDAYEEN DID IN 1970. UNCERTAINTY ON THIS SCORE SEEMS TO HAVE PROMPTED PLO/FATAH "MODERATES" TO TREAD MORE SOFTLY IN TAKING ISSUE WITH EGYPTIAN POLICY THAN PLO AND "REJECTIONISTS" HAVE DONE. OFFICIAL PLO STATEMENTS THUS FAR HAVE BEEN LIMITED TO EXPRESSIONS OF "DISQUIET" RE RESULTS OF SALZBURG TALKS AND SADAT'S DECISION TO REOPEN SUEZ CANAL, AND THEY HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN TO ECHO QADHAFI'S CALL FOR EARLY ARAB SUMMIT MEETING (SEE QUADDUMI'S JUNE 9 STATEMENTS IN ALGIERS). ON OTHER HAND, PLO LEADERSHIP APPEAR TO HAVE ALREADY EMBARKED ON ANOTHER MAJOR POLITICAL EFFORT TO GALVANIZE ARAB OPPOSITION TO EGYPTIAN POLICY, AND IT IS LIKELY THEY WILL HEAT UP NEW CONCERTED PLO PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO THIS

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SAME END. (SIGNS OF LATTER HAVE ALREADY APPEARED IN JUNE 8 ISSUE OF PLO WEEKLY, PALESTINE REVOLUTION.) ALTHOUGH THEY CAN OBVIOUSLY COUNT ON WHOLEHEARTED LIBYAN AS WELL AS FEDAYEEN 'REJECTIONIST' SUPPORT FOR THIS EFFORT, WE BELIEVE ITS EFFECTIVENESS WILL BE DETERMINED PRIMARILY BY ATTITUDE OF SYRIA. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WOULD EXPECT PLO LEADERSHIP TO PUSH FOR EARLY FORMATION OF JOINT PLO-SYRIAN COMMAND (LAST TALKS ON THIS SUBJECT TOOK PLACE IN DAMASCUS MAY 27) AS ONE MEANS OF ENSURING SARG SUPPORT FOR THEIR FUTURE EFFORTS TO INCREASE ARAB PRESSURES ON SADAT. COULD BE THAT THESE EFFORTS WILL FAIL TO DEVELOP AS MUCH STEAM AS DID SIMILAR PLO MOVES EARLIER THIS YEAR. (AS BEST WE CAN DETERMINE, SARG HAS BEEN COMPLETELY SILENT RE SADAT'S BEHAVIOR SINCE SALZBURG. MOREOVER, POSITIONS OF OTHER ARAB GOVTS--NOTABLY IRAQ AND ALGERIA--MAY NOT RPT NOT THIS TIME BE AS EASY TO INFLUENCE AS -ARAFAT AND CO. WOULD LIKE.) IN THAT EVENT, WE WOULD EXPECT GENERAL

RESURGENCE OF FEDAYEEN "SPOILING" ACTIVITIES BOTH IN ARAB WORLD
(PARTICULARLY IN UNSTABLE LEBANON) AND ALSO PERHAPS OUTSIDE ME.
LATTER PROSPECT, IN OUR VIEW, IS MATTER FOR SERIOUS CONCERN
AT TIME WHEN LIBYAN GOVT HAS BEEN GIVING AMPLE PROOF OF ITS
EAGERNESS TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO HELP FEDAYEEN
"REJECTIONISTS" AND DISILLUSIONED "MODERATES" SABOTAGE KISSINGER
MISSION AND OTHERWISE OBSTRUCT ME SETTLEMENT PROCESS.
GODLEY

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